

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

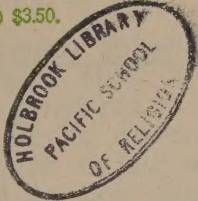
Chairman
Tomio Muto

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Editors:
Chuzo Yamada
Ronald G Korver.

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PRIMITIVE GOSPEL SOCIETY TO DISSOLVE

To quell mounting criticism that it is working toward the establishment of a new denomination, the Genshi Fukuin Kai (Primitive Gospel Society), which is the organized body supporting the Genshi Fukuin Undo (Primitive Gospel Movement), has announced its intentions to dissolve and to continue its activities without any supporting organization.

With the nation-wide spread of the Primitive Gospel Movement there have come the inevitable criticisms and probes. In a recent issue of the Kyodan's official publication Shimpo, Ryoza Saji, professor at Tsurukawa Rural Institute and Masakuni Chiba, pastor of the Kyodan's Shibata Church, dealt rather sharply with the active movement. However, their criticism, also directed towards Ikuo Tejima, leading personality of the movement, seems to have missed the heart of the matter.

The aforementioned Saji says in his article that the people of the Primitive Gospel Movement "nurture delusions in their belief that with the presence of the Holy Spirit they will be able to do as great works as Christ and His disciples." He also says that "Tejima's theory includes no eschatology. . . His belief in the atonement and his conception of sin and the cross are doctrinally weak. . . They contradict themselves in saying they will not

establish a new denomination, but actually they are establishing tabernacles."

In opposition, Tejima, Takashi Abe, pastor of the Kyodan Church at Urawa and Norayoshi Hidaka, pastor of the Kumamoto Baptist Church, vigorously refuted these criticisms in the Nov. issue of the Inochi no Hikari (Light of Life). Tejima stated in the article, "It is not the purpose of the Primitive Gospel Society to argue with established denominational churches, moreover, such argument is not Biblical. . . . To do away with the misconception of some that we are attempting to establish a new church we shall dissolve the Primitive Gospel Society and will have no organization which in any way resembles an organized church."

In an interview with a reporter of the Kirisuto Shimbun (The Christ Weekly) Tejima said, "I fear nothing more than misunderstanding. The Primitive Gospel is a central proposition for the entire Christian Church and is no special motto or characteristic of our group. God has revealed to us that doing away with the supporting organization will actually aid in the peoples understanding of our real intention. For the sake of convenience and liason in furthering the work of the movement, I hope to set up a Primitive Gospel Evangelism Committee and I will also serve as chief editor of the Inochi no Hikari."

SEMINARIES A PROBLEM

At a recent meeting of the Theological Schools' Committee of the United Church of Christ in Japan (Kyodan), the problem of the balance between the number of seminary graduates and the number of available posts was suggested for the agenda of the 4th Theological Schools' Problems' Conference to be held next April. The "Seminary Problem" will also be one of the matters discussed at the forth-coming Council of Cooperation (COC) (liason organ for cooperation among Kyodan, related Christian Schools, related Social Work League and the Interboard Committee) sponsored Conference in March, 1963. The seminary situation being one of the important factors in the establishment of a basic policy on witness by the Kyodan, is gradually attracting the necessary attention.

The main topic for discussion at the coming Theological Schools' Problem Conference will be "The Kyodan's Basic Policy on Witness and Seminary Training." Approximately 20 representatives from the various seminaries and theological schools and 20 Kyodan leaders are expected to attend the meeting. Kyodan-related seminaries are the Kyodan established Tokyo Union Theological Seminary, and the Kyodan approved Japan Biblical Seminary, Tsurukawa Rural Institute, Tokyo Bible School, Doshisha Union Theological School, Kwansei Gakuin Union Theological School and Aoyama Union Theological Department.

The Theological School's Committee announced the following matters for study at the conference: 1) Legal relation between Kyodan and Seminaries. This involves not only the relation between the schools as educational corporate bodies and the Kyodan as a religious corporate body, but also the management of the seminaries and the establishment of the legal relationship

between the Kyodan and the students and/or graduates of the seminaries. Note: At present, when seminary graduates pass the qualifying examination of the Kyodan they are recognized as evangelists, however, they are not guaranteed a post. 2) Classification of seminary professors. According to Kyodan regulations there are classifications such as ordained minister, licentiate, seminary professors, etc. Only the ordained minister, qualifies for the position as a seminary professor, layman teaching at seminaries can never become a professor. As the problem concerns the Faith and Order Committee it will cooperate in the study. 3) The seminary curriculum. For example, close cooperation with the Kyodan is necessary in the area of practical theology. The relation between the curriculum and the position of the Christian education secretary which was created at the past General Assembly, also the intern system will be discussed. 4) Balance between number of graduates and posts of assignment. Until now a balance has been maintained, thus in a sense guaranteeing a post; however, there is the possibility of a shortage of posts in the near future partially because of financial difficulties. To forestall such a situation, it has been proposed that the kyoku (districts) or chiku (sections) set up a financial pool to help finance the new appointees or to establish new posts such as Kyoku evangelism secretary or itinerate preacher.

The hope is to develop a broader interpretation of who and what is a ministerial member. It is maintained that in this complicated, modern world we cannot consider only the pastor of the individual church as a ministerial member, but that those engaged in pioneer evangelism, industrial evangelism, educational evangelism, etc., should also be recognized as full-time workers.

ASSOCIATION FOR RELIEF OF LEPROSY IN ASIA INAUGURATED

A private organization to help combat leprosy by sending Japanese physicians and funds for facilities to Asian countries, including more than thirty political, financial, cultural and religious leaders, will be inaugurated in Tokyo, Dec. 7. (Note JCAN May 15, 1962 issue)

A goal of 150 million yen has been set to be raised in three years through public donations. One of the first projects is to be a clinic which is to be developed into a complete 100 bed hospital in northern India.

The central figure in the organizing of the association is Dr. Matsunori Miyazaki, a member of the Kyodan Shirakawa Church in Kumamoto. Dr. Miyazaki has made trips to India to aid in leprosy work there, once at the invitation of the Indian government.

The association also hopes to extend aid to other Asian countries including Burma, Pakistan, Indonesia and Thailand.

JAPAN WESLEY ASSOCIATION

The Japan Wesley Association has been organized with headquarters at Aoyama Gakuin University "for the study of the message of John Wesley and the publication of Wesley's works in Japanese."

Dr. Zenta Watanabe, association president, writing in a small brochure introducing the association says that, "Unfortunately in Japan John Wesley has been considered only as one who emphasized experience, while the whole import and depth of his theological message has not been properly understood. Wesley's characteristic emphasis on the Assurance of Salvation and on Christian Perfection have not been seen against the richness of his total thought. . . we believe that in his message theology and experience are properly combined . . . Study of Wesley's thought must take place against the background of contemporary theological discussion as well as the present situation in Japan. We must make every effort to bring Wesley's message to the church in Japan because we believe that it is vital to its life."

Translations, a Wesley Journal, study conferences, a Wesley Study Library and visiting scholars of Wesley's thoughts make up a complete program.

Correction: The following lines were omitted near the bottom of Page 1, of Nov. 15 issue.

. . . public school instructors. Some went as far as to demand that the . . .

